"ART"

Assessment, Recovery, Transition

The Application of the State's Project Management
Methodology to Troubled Projects

State of Michigan
Department of Information Technology
Project Management Resource Center

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"ART" Introduction

The "ART" of Dealing with Troubled Projects was developed as a guide to assist in the Assessment, Recovery and Transition of troubled projects within the State of Michigan. ART is a customized companion to the State of Michigan Project Management Methodology (PMM) and schedule templates (in both Niku Workbench and MS Project). For more information on the State's PM Methodology, visit the DIT Project Management web site at http://www.michigan.gov/projectmanagement.

Troubled Project Identification

A ***successful project*** is defined as one that is completed on time and on budget, with all the features and functions initially specified, including approved modifications. There are some key symptoms that projects display as they begin to slide into the classification of a troubled project.

The meaning of a ***troubled project*** is somewhat relative, because it depends on the situation. In some cases, no slippage - lengthening - at all is allowable in the schedule, so there is little tolerance for schedule variance. In cases of internal projects, more schedule tolerance may be acceptable. It is difficult to come up with a comprehensive definition. The situation will escalate to troubled status when one of the major stakeholders (customer, supplier, sponsor, etc.) can no longer tolerate the situation – in other words, when the variance trends have exceeded acceptable levels of tolerance and the project is heading for failure. Often times, the project is drifting into troubled status long before the major stakeholders take notice.

There are specific characteristics of troubled projects that require assessment, recovery and transition, including:

- No one on the project has a firm idea of when the project will be finished and people have given up trying to guess.
- The project deliverables are loaded with errors and defects.
- Team members are working excessive involuntary overtime.
- Management has lost its ability to control progress or even to ascertain the project's status with any level of accuracy.
- Requirements keep changing.
- Goals, assumptions, and constraints are inconsistent.
- Dysfunctional communication exists.
- The team is defensive about its progress.
- The customer has lost confidence that the project team will ever deliver the promised deliverables.
- The morale of the project team is very low.
- Relations among project team members are strained.
- Management is considering the cancellation of the project.
- The customer is threatening to take action against the performing organization.
- Many work packages have been 90 percent complete for what seems like forever.

Troubled Project Continuum

Figure 1 was developed by ESI, International and represents the five levels of severity that a troubled project may experience.

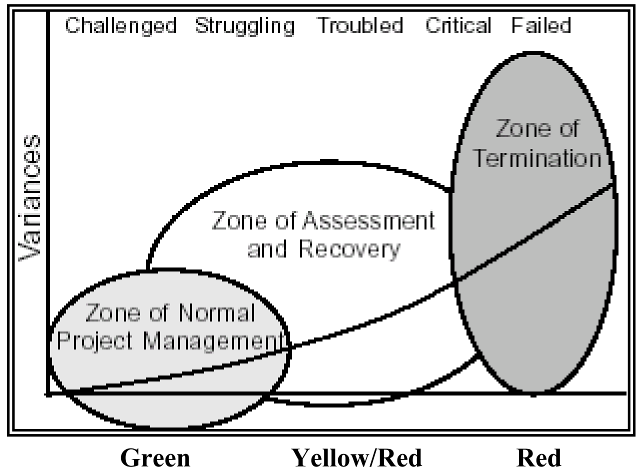

Figure 1
Levels of Severity

The titles for the sections of the graph (challenged, struggling, troubled, critical and failed) are arbitrary terms used to indicate typical stages of a troubled project. The variances grow worse from left to right. If the project is toward the left side of the graph and variances exist, then normal project management practices would apply. If the team determines that the variances are too extreme, the project is a strong candidate for termination instead of recovery.

For purposes of consistency and discussion, the following definitions of the stages of a troubled project apply:

A ***challenged project*** is compromised by being over budget, over the original time estimates, and offers fewer features and/or functions than originally specified.

A ***struggling project*** is proceeding only with difficulty or great effort towards accomplishing its goals and objectives.

A ***troubled project*** is disordered, has no concerted motion towards its stated goals and objectives, and is in a state of confusion.

A ***project in critical condition*** is at a turning point and an abrupt change for better or worse is to be expected. It is in or approaching a state of crisis, characterized by risk or uncertainty. When a project is at this point, the time has come to make the decision on whether the project can be recovered or should be terminated.

A ***failed project*** is canceled at some point during the project life cycle due to exceeding the budget beyond available funding, failing to meet key milestone dates, missing deliverables or falling short of expectations.

What triggers the application of the ART?

Project managers know that variances are likely to occur on any project. In fact, a project manager should be very concerned if there are no schedule or cost variances. The question is not whether there are variances or not; the question is whether these variances are acceptable or not.

A project with acceptable variances is within the zone of normal project management, as referenced in Figure 1. In this zone, normal project management practices are applied, for example, fast tracking, crashing, and working overtime. On the other hand, if the variances are too large or unacceptable, then the project is a strong candidate for termination, not recovery.

When the variances fall between these two areas, ART should be applied.

ART Overview

ART is designed to aid in the recognition of troubled projects and serve as a tool for use in getting these projects back on track. There are six life-cycle-level phases in ART as shown in Figure 2.

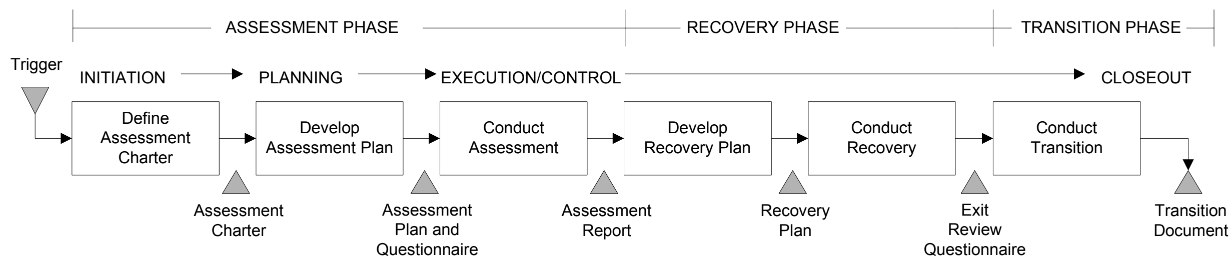

Figure 2
ART Life Cycle

- Define the assessment charter.
- Develop the assessment plan.
- Conduct the assessment.
- Develop the recovery plan.
- Conduct the recovery.
- Transition to normalized project status.

Each of these phases has been designed with specific entry and exit criteria. This information will be discussed in additional detail throughout this document.

Several PMM templates have been customized for use in dealing with troubled projects, and include:

Assessment Phase
- Assessment Charter
- Assessment Plan
- Assessment Questionnaire
- Assessment Report

Recovery Phase
- Lessons Learned Document
- Recovery Plan
- Exit Review Questionnaire

Transition Phase
- Transition Document

A standardized project schedule template is incorporated in ART in both Niku Workbench and MS Project formats. The project schedule template contains the following major phases:

- Initiation or concept (assessment charter development)
- Planning (assessment plan development)
- Execution (developing and executing the assessment and recovery plans, maintaining the new project schedule, managing project scope changes, and managing project issues)

- Control (status report preparation and status meetings)
- Closeout, or transition (validating customer expectations, documenting lessons learned, official recovery sign-off)

For soft copies of the ART including document and scheduling templates, point your web browser to http://www.michigan.gov/projectmanagement, under "General PM Information" click on "Project Management Methodology," and then under "Related Documents," click on "The ART of Dealing with Troubled Projects" link. Or, you may send an email request to DIT-ProjectManagement@michigan.gov.

The Workflow Diagram in Figure 3 graphically depicts the use of ART.

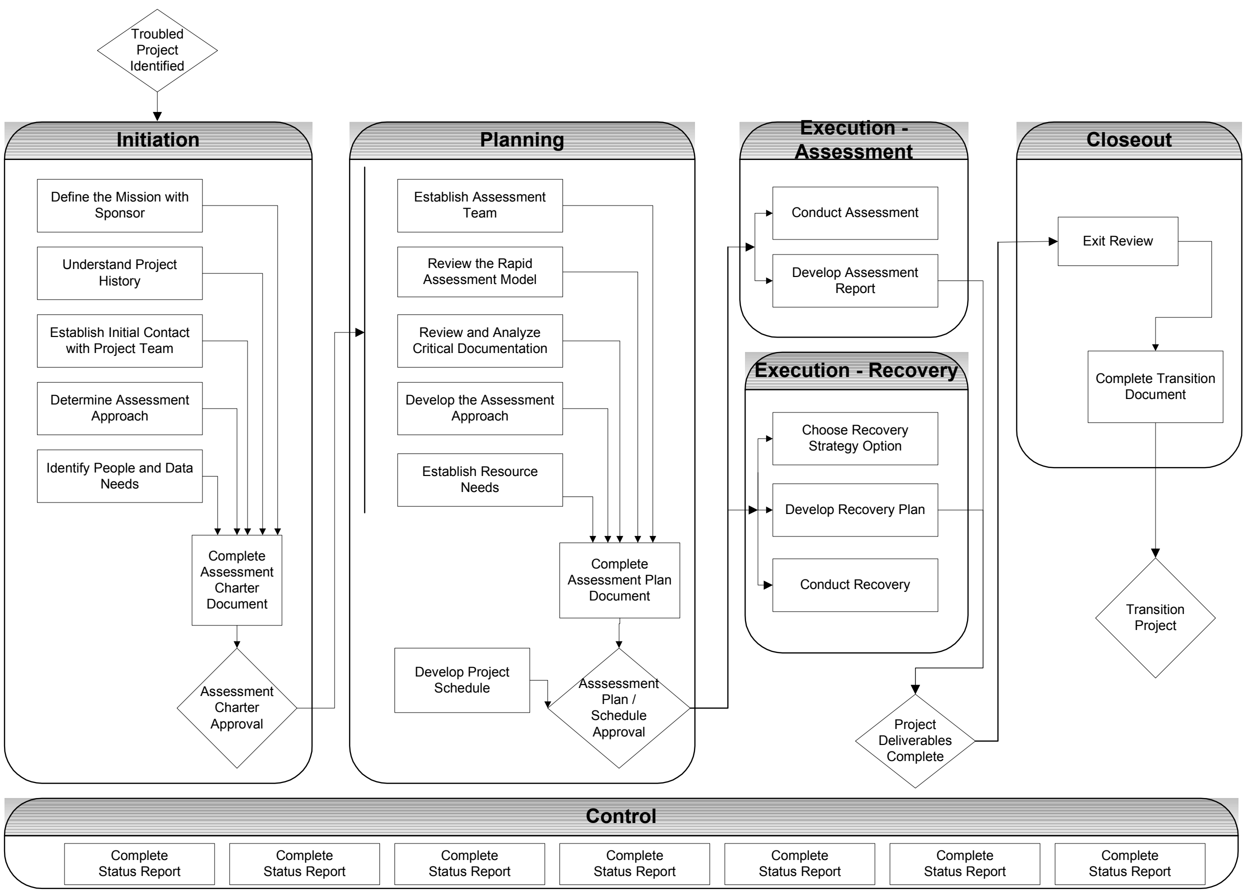

Figure 3
ART Workflow Diagram

Assessment

The focus of the assessment phase is on determining the current "real" status of the project and determining the changes needed in people, product, process and tools. "Real" status is the key word. The assessor must understand exactly what is accomplished on the project and what is not complete in order to build the recovery plan.

Frequently, there are problems with the project team's status tracking and reporting; often, there is no reporting system at all. "Real" status is defined by the remaining open WBS work items. This must include all open work packages plus defect repair, problem closure, testing and other outstanding items. There are seven key variables or areas that must be investigated during an assessment:

- WBS
- Issues
- Risks
- Resources
- Schedule
- Management system and control processes
- Communications

Assessment Phase Overview

The main objectives of the assessment phase are to:
- Determine the current status of the project.
- Determine the corrective actions needed to bring the project back on track.

The project's characteristics (size, technology, strategic importance, complexity, and political environment) will affect these objectives. To achieve an accurate project status report, the parts of the project that have been completed and the work packages that are pending, including the work required to repair the defects, if any, must be identified. Keep in mind that most derailed projects do not have an effective project management information system, which integrates scope, cost, schedule, and deliverables information. But this information is needed to build the recovery plan. In this phase, subject matter experts will be needed to help meet these objectives.

ART is like a short project and should be managed as such and assigned a standard Project Life Cycle: Initiation, Planning, Execution, Control, and Closeout.

Initiation Phase
The Assessment Charter is the main deliverable of the Initiation Phase. The charter will ensure that everyone involved is committed to the same objectives.

Planning Phase
The major deliverable of the Planning Phase is the Assessment Plan. It should include all the basic components of a project plan.

Execution/Control Phase
The major deliverables of the Execution/Control Phase is the Assessment Report and Recovery Plan. It should include the results of the assessment such as ranked threats, opportunities, problems, and recommendations. Other deliverables include status reports and other communications. The Assessment Project Manager has to obtain approval, commitment, and sign-offs before proceeding to the next phase.

Closeout Phase
The Closeout Phase includes the Exit Review Questionnaire and the Transition

document.

The following sections discuss the objectives of each deliverable, with an overview of the processes to be followed in order to prepare them.

Assessment Charter Definition

A project charter is defined as “the document that communicates the existence of a project after it has been selected for implementation or creation. It contains vital information about the project and its leadership." In the case of a troubled project, this charter outlines the assessment, recovery, and transition.

The main objectives of developing an Assessment Charter, are to:

- Formally sanction the existence of the assessment and recovery project
- Provide assessment and recovery leads with the proper authority
- Complete activities necessary to develop an Assessment Plan

Figure 4 shows an overview of the process involved in defining the charter. The assessment charter is usually written after a trigger event occurs, such as a worried call or letter from a customer or a sponsor who is concerned about a project’s status.

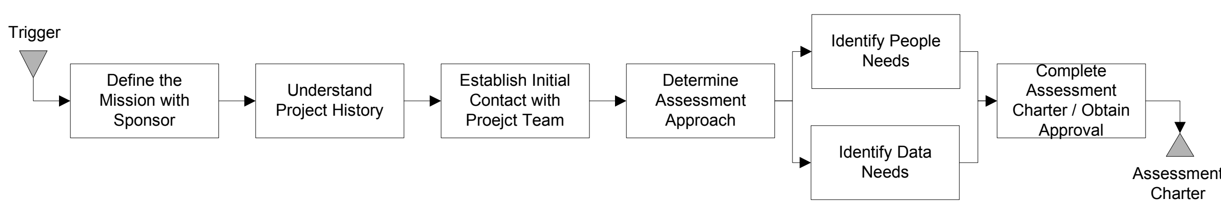

Figure 4
Assessment Charter Definition

After the trigger event, the following steps should occur.

Define the mission with the sponsor
Usually the mission is assessment and recovery, but sometimes alternate options may be discussed, such as determining the best way to cancel a project. This step makes sure the perspective of the sponsor is clearly understood.

Understand the project history
The assessment project manager needs to understand the project history and its sensitivity. This understanding may lead to the discovery of hidden issues, theories, or other factors related to the reasons for the project’s problems.

Establish initial contact with the project team
Engaging the current team from the beginning of this process is extremely important. This involvement makes sure that everyone involved agrees on and is committed to the same agreed-upon objectives.

Determine the assessment approach
During this step, the assessment project manager will develop a plan for conducting the assessment. Planning tools may include a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), a network diagram, resources and a schedule of the actual assessment. Some of the questions asked include:

- How are we going to develop the Assessment Plan?
- What activities do we need to develop the Assessment Plan?
- How long will it take?

Identify people and data needs
Given the domain of the project, certain skills, people and data are needed solely to build a plan to conduct the assessment. Some understanding of the status of the project, plans and tasks will be needed to build the plan. Some of the questions that will be answered are:

- What resources do we need to conduct the assessment?
- What data do we need to conduct the assessment?
- How do we get the data?

Complete the Assessment Assessment Charter
The assessment project manager will complete the Assessment Charter and obtain approval from the Assessment Sponsor.

Assessment Plan Development

The main objectives of the assessment plan are to:

- Guide the assessment process in order to achieve the objectives of the charter.
- Enable the assessment team to perform the assessment in the shortest period of time possible.
- Ensure that accurate findings are produced.
- Minimize project team distraction.

The plan will help the assessment team achieve the objectives of the charter. A plan will also enable the team to perform the assessment quickly without compromising the accuracy of the findings. The basic process flow and steps to performing the process include the following as shown in Figure 5.

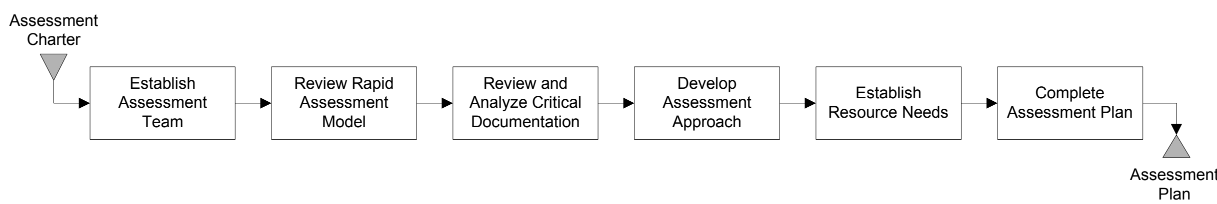

Figure 5
Assessment Plan Development

Establish assessment team
In this step, the required staff is obtained and team-building exercises begin, such as a kickoff meeting. Setting the correct tone with the assessment team is critical.

Assessment team members have a tendency to think that the current project team members don't have the skills to run a successful project. This negative thinking sets an adversarial tone and may hinder the recovery process. The Assessment Project Manager should make sure that current project team members understand that the assessment team members are there to discover why the project is troubled and to make recommendations for recovery, not to lay blame. The current project team needs to brief the assessment team on sensitive issues, such as management commitment, project leadership issues, personnel turnover, customer mindset and confidentiality. If the two teams have a good rapport, the assessment team will be able to more easily gather this information.

Review the assessment model
In part, the work breakdown structure must be reviewed with the assessment team members to ensure understanding of how the assessment will be conducted.

Review and analyze critical documentation
The main objectives of this step are to build a solid understanding of the project and to begin to formulate hypotheses. Examples of critical documentation that should be reviewed during the assessment include:

- Project charter, if applicable, and objectives
- Estimating and pricing details
- Project plans and status reports
- Project metrics and processes
- Statements of work or equivalent
- Signed agreements, both internal and external
- Project organizational charts
- The project notebook, which usually contains all available documentation

The assessment project manager may also distribute tools the team can use to conduct the assessment. These may include an assessment team questionnaire form or forms that will allow team members to document threats, opportunities and problems.

Develop the assessment approach
The assessment plan is highly affected by project size, complexity and domain. The plan must include:

- Focused objectives
- WBS for conducting the assessment
- Resources for assessment
- Risk and problem management
- Schedule (planned to the required detail)
- List of deliverables
- A detailed agenda of the plan

Establish resource needs
The staffing and skills needed to conduct the assessment will depend on the Assessment Plan. The assessment project manager should keep in mind that resources must be sufficient to complete the entire assessment in a very short period of time – at most, three days.

Complete the Assessment Plan
The Assessment Project Manager will complete the Assessment Plan and then request approval from the assessment sponsor prior to starting the assessment.

Conducting the Assessment

In order to begin an accurate assessment, the assessment team must determine the true current status of the project. During this initial phase, the assessment team can also begin to consider an overall recovery strategy.

The main objectives of the Assessment Phase are to:

- Determine the current status of the project.
- Identify major threats, opportunities, and problems.
- Begin to consider overall recovery.

The assessment should consist of the following steps as shown in Figure 6 and detailed below.

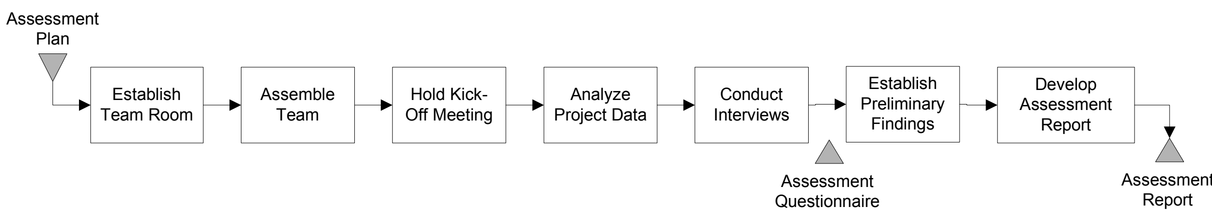

Figure 6
Assessment Overview

Establish a team room
The assessment planning stage should have identified documents, files and other items the assessment team will need in the team room. The team room, if required, must be set up before the team arrives to begin the assessment.

Assemble the assessment team
By this stage, the assessment team will most likely have expanded in size. The assessment project manager should remind the assessment team of the purpose, objectives and scope of the assessment. The assessment project manager and assessment team need to keep in mind that this is a temporary assignment of a relatively short duration.

Hold the assessment kickoff meeting
All stakeholders need to attend the kickoff meeting. A proposed agenda is shown below:

Troubled Project Kickoff meeting agenda

Introductions: Most people know each other, but there may be a few new faces.

- **Project Review**: Most people know the general background of the project and why it was needed. Go a little further and cover the scope, major deliverables to be produced, the risks and assumptions, and the estimated effort and duration. These are details about the project that most people are not aware of. Some discussion about whether all of the appropriate deliverables were included, as well as the deadline for completion should be done here, as it will provide for a good give-and-take discussion and help to set expectations.
- **Roles and responsibilities**: This is an important area, since all of the people in the room will have some role to play. In some cases, the clients themselves may not be fully aware of the level of participation that would be required from them. Again, the entire discussion will help with establishing expectations for the project.
- **Project approach and overall timeline**: Use this time to describe, in general, how the project is organized and how it will be executed. Do not go through the actual work plan, since it is generally too low-level to provide a clear, overall picture.
- **Questions**: There may be time remaining for any questions that were not covered in the discussion.
- **Recap/summary**: This is a good way to end the meeting. Recap the discussion that took place. Also cover any items that need immediate action, note who is responsible, and when the resolution is due.

Stakeholders may include the sponsor or customer that requested this assessment, the assessment team, the assessment project manager, key project team leaders, anyone who is on the interview list and anyone upon whom the assessment team may depend. In addition, key project area leads should present project overview data at the meeting.

This kickoff meeting is crucial as it may help to build an extended team that will carry forward into the recovery stage. This assessment team consistency will increase the chances for a successful project recovery effort.

Analyze original project data
Project data that should be thoroughly reviewed during the assessment includes:

- Project charter and objectives
- Estimating and pricing details
- Work breakdown structure
- Project plans
- Project metrics (earned value, completed tasks) and project processes
- Statements of work or equivalent
- Signed external agreements with clients and subcontractors
- Signed internal agreements with internal organizations
- Management system and control processes (management meetings, approvals)
- Risk management - control plans and status
- Financial management – control plans, status, and variances
- Schedule management – control plans, status, and variances
- Communications between client and project manager
- Scope management – control plans, status, and variances
- Change management, reports and tracking data
- Resource labor logs, reports and tracking data
- External and internal correspondence

- Copies of deliverables and customer acceptances

The assessment questionnaire includes the questions that should be addressed while analyzing the project data.

Conduct interviews
During the assessment planning stage, the assessment team identified employees who have vital information on the project. Now, the assessment team needs to interview these staff members to gather information that may not be documented or to explain other project documentation. The information that is collected during the interviews includes names of the interviewer and interviewee, date of interview, and important notes. The Assessment Questionnaire includes this information.

Establish preliminary findings
In this phase, threats, opportunities, and problems (TOPs) are identified, analyzed, and ranked. The assessment team can brainstorm to quickly compile a list of threats, opportunities and problems. Establishing this list will increase the likelihood of turning a troubled project around. The findings need to be summarized, validated, updated and finalized with the project team, or assessment team, and the sponsor.

Develop an Assessment Report
Once the project status has been analyzed, the Assessment Project Manager should develop a findings report that includes the following information:

- Background of project
- Scope of review
- Key findings
- Recommendations
- Immediate action plans

Bear in mind that during the Assessment Phase, project work must not stop. Work continues using a prioritization scheme. Intensive communication among the original project team members is essential during this phase in order to feed the work authorization process.

After this assessment phase is complete, the assessment team can move on to the next phase — how to plan and conduct the recovery phase.

Recovery

In the recovery phase, the focus is on developing and implementing a recovery plan. Following are some general, practical guidelines for addressing troubled projects:

- The project team must be open-minded and ready to change.
- There is no magic solution or silver bullet. Assessment and recovery is about basic project management skills.
- Each project is different and must be handled as such.
- People frequently cause problems.
- Any work reported as done must be done. This step may seem obvious but project teams frequently misreport the status of work performed in status reports.
- During the assessment, the assessors must ask themselves whether the processes and metrics the project team is using are adequate for the project.
- Recovery must be done in the context of the project's unique objectives.
- Accept what can be fixed and what cannot.

Recovery Plan Overview

The main objectives of the recovery phase are to develop a recovery plan and to implement this plan. The focus of the recovery is on:

- Resolving project issues
- Producing an achievable schedule
- Rebuilding the project team
- Negotiating and updating project baselines
- Reestablishing stakeholder confidence in the project

Recovery Plan Development

The recovery of a project should itself be treated like a project. As with any project, having a detailed and realistic plan before project launch can help to ensure a successful outcome. Therefore, the recovery team, which may be the same as the assessment team, needs a detailed project plan to ensure a successful final deliverable – project recovery. The main objective of the recovery plan is to establish a detailed road map that will assist the recovery team in putting the project back on track. This "map" should include processes and tools needed to achieve this goal. During the planning stages, the recovery team should also continue to build confidence and morale among the original project team.

Figure 7 shows an overview of the recovery plan development process. The steps are as follows:

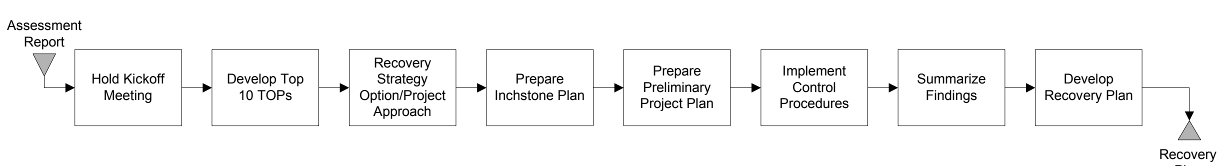

Figure 7
Recovery Plan Development

Hold kickoff meeting
Just as during the assessment phase, all stakeholders need to attend the kickoff meeting for developing the recovery plan. Stakeholders may include the sponsor or customer, the recovery team, the project manager, key project team leaders and anyone else upon whom the recovery team may depend.

Again, the kickoff meeting is crucial to continue building the extended team that was formed during the assessment phase. Additional team members may or may not be required. Team consistency will ensure proper recovery planning and increase the chance for a successful project recovery.

Develop top 10 TOPs
When developing the top 10 threats, opportunities and problems (TOPs), it's important that all stakeholders be interviewed to ensure a complete and thorough list.

Recovery Strategy Option/Project Approach
When the preceding steps have been completed, the findings can be summarized. The major findings will consist of identifying the recovery strategy option. There are four fundamental approaches for recovering a project:

> ***Reduce scope***
> The team can reduce scope by identifying and cutting features low on the stakeholder priority list. This scope reduction may enable the original project team to finish within time and effort planned
>
> ***Increase resource productivity***
> The second option is to increase productivity by focusing on short-term improvements, such as overtime.
>
> ***Lengthen schedule***
> The third option involves recognizing that the project will not be ready on time. The team will slip the schedule and proceed with damage control.
>
> ***Compromise***
> The fourth, and most preferable, option for recovery involves a little of all three of the above options. By dropping only a few features, increasing productivity as much as possible and slipping the schedule as needed, the project should be back on track.
>
> ***Damage Control***
> Sometimes at this stage, the best way to prevent further lost investment of time and money may be to cancel the project. Appendix A provides additional information on canceling troubled projects.

Prepare Inchstone Plan
The detailed inchstone plan should be used frequently to monitor progress and can be modified as necessary.

An "inchstone" is a detailed miniature milestone - a very small but measurable accomplishment. Milestones are comprised of inchstones.

A task may be broken into smaller inchstones, each with definable and measurable results, and each inchstone assigned a percentage totaling 100% for the entire task. As each inchstone is accomplished, that percentage of the work is considered earned.

There are two advantages to the inchstone approach. First, nothing becomes a huge problem before it is known, and second, it is apparent every hour of the day exactly where the task is in relation to the schedule and cost on a project. It then doesn't matter how difficult or how big a project is: If it is broken into small enough pieces, it can be managed.

Prepare preliminary project plan
Since the recovery itself is a project, a project plan will be needed.

Implement control processes
Control processes, such as daily progress reports, will keep the newly recovered project on track.

Summarize Findings
Gather and organize the data collected during the preceding steps in a logical fashion that facilitates completion of the Recovery Plan document.

Develop Recovery Plan
After the findings have been summarized, the recovery team will have a cohesive, workable recovery plan and can move on to the final step of conducting the recovery.

Conducting the Recovery

Implementation of the recovery plan should be started when the key stakeholders, such as the customer, management, and project team, are committed and ready to take the required actions to recover the derailed project. If recovery is launched too soon, stakeholders will not believe that it is necessary. If recovery is launched too late, the consequences will be severe. Appendix B provides information on project success factors that may need to be addressed during recovery.

The recovery team can now use the plan to conduct the recovery. Project recovery is conducted simultaneously with existing project activities. Critical success factors for conducting the recovery are:

- Commitment
- Communication skills
- Competencies
- Understanding the real status
- Constantly reviewing the work status
- Focus
- Prioritization of threats and opportunities
- Managing politics

The main objectives of this phase are to:

- Execute the recovery plan in order to put the derailed project back on track.
- Produce accurate forecast of project completion.

Comprehensive recovery plans, commitment to these plans, and meticulous control are mandatory for conducting the recovery.

It may be identified that the real problem is that the project manager does not have the required project management skills and/or experience or that the project is missing a sponsor. In these cases, the recovery team will have to escalate the issue(s) for resolution.

Figure 8, shown below, outlines the recovery process and includes the following steps:

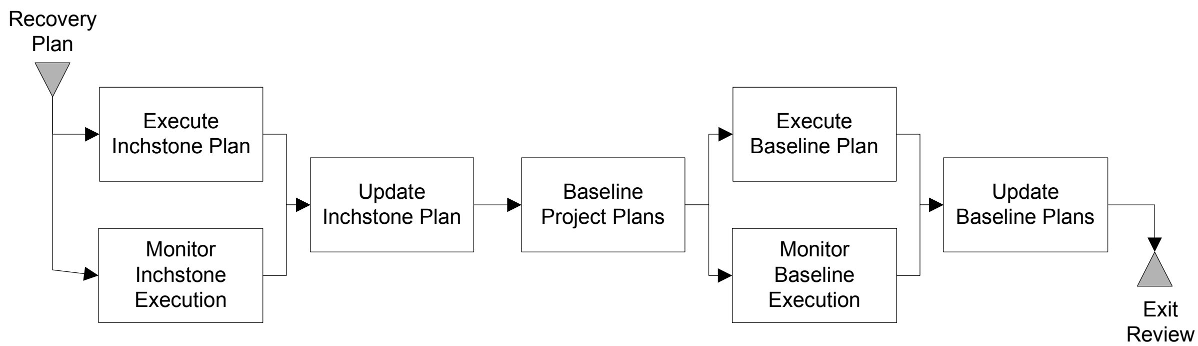

Figure 8
Recovery Process

Execute and monitor Inchstone Plan
It is important to continually monitor inchstone plan execution. Early detection of slippage during this phase can lessen the impact of missed deadlines and help to readjust the inchstone plan as necessary.

Update Inchstone Plan
In an iterative project management process, the inchstone plan can be continually updated as needed. This close scrutiny of the plan helps to detect problems early and makes recovery easier and more efficient.

Baseline project plans
Baselining the plan helps to readjust schedule, cost or performance goals.

Execute and monitor baseline plan
As with inchstones, the recovery team should continually monitor baseline plan execution.

Update baseline plan
Based on their findings, the recovery team should update the plan as necessary to adjust for any slippage.

Ensuring Successful Recovery

The development of the recovery plan must focus equally on people, processes and products. Also, the recovery team, as well as the organization as a whole, needs to implement a comprehensive project management information system for tracking and controlling the status of work packages – now and for future projects. Comprehensive recovery plans; commitment to these plans and meticulous control will help ensure successful recovery.

Transition

Project transition is as important as assessment and recovery in a troubled project. The main objectives of the Transition Phase are to:

- Allow the assessment and/or recovery team to begin working on the next troubled project.
- Allow the original project team (or a new project team) to continue to move the troubled project forward to completion.

Figure 9 shows an overview of the transition phase:

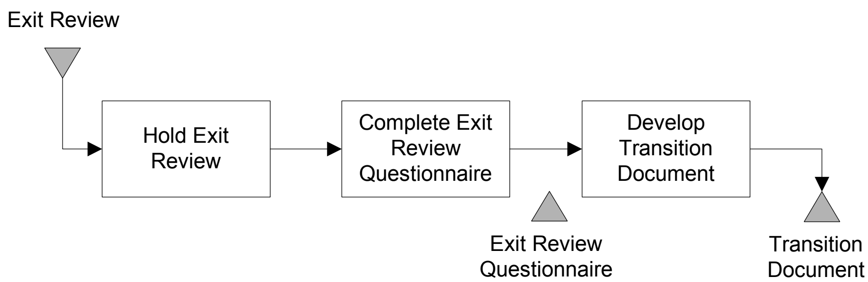

Figure 9
Transition Phase

Hold exit review
An exit review helps to pass the newly recovered project off to the original project team for completion. During this time, the recovery team can also close out the recovery project. Closeout should include documenting Lessons Learned, which can be used for any future troubled projects.

Complete Exit Review Questionnaire
Using information from the exit review, the Exit Review Questionnaire can be completed.

Develop Transition Document
The Transition Document includes the summarized lessons learned and identified best practices from the exit review. It also documents any additional information that will help the original project team or the new project team move forward with the transition.

ART will assist the State of Michigan with the identification, assessment, recovery and transition of troubled projects. Identifying and transitioning these projects from “troubled” projects back to “normal” projects as soon as practical will result in overall reduced costs, shorter project delivery, completed deliverables, and more satisfied project teams and customers.

Appendix A

Recovering or Shutting Down Troubled Projects

The obvious methods, such as learning as much as possible about the organization, industry, project, products, people, policies, and other areas, are not covered here, nor is time spent on normal project activities, such as those noted in PMI's PMBOK and the State's PM Methodology. SOURCE - http://www.dataanalysis.com/dataanalysis/PMCols/PMACols.htm

When to Cancel a Project

Once an assessment has been made, the decision must be made on whether to attempt to recover a project or to cancel the project altogether. This decision should be made strategically, as terminating a project is often the last resort but will ultimately cost less than attempting to recover an unrecoverable project. Some reasons why a recovery is not possible or cancellation of a project is the wiser choice include:

- We cannot achieve the business benefits associated with the project.
- The political environment within the performing organization is no longer supportive.
- The sponsor has dropped the project and no replacement is apparent.
- The business needs that the project is trying to satisfy are no longer valid.
- Major technological changes have occurred that render the proposed deliverable obsolete.
- Litigation is in process.
- Market conditions have changed.

The sponsor has departed and no replacement is apparent.

The set of steps listed below can be used to find if the project can or should be saved. While it ***can*** work to analyze in-depth the factors leading to the project becoming troubled, this can set up even more barriers to change. These barriers range from existing Team members cementing their technical or schedule positions to executives posturing or shredding documents.

To effect change in the least amount of time, always **focus on the data, the goals, and moving forward**, not laying blame. There is plenty of time later to do a lessons learned or other study on why the project went bad.

Steps to gain control of a runaway project:

1. **Negotiate** the purpose of the recovery and the parameters of your power.
2. **Stop** most ongoing project work to focus on what is really needed.
3. **Gain** control of the status report and decision-making.
4. **Review** scope and renegotiate reasonable requirements and schedule.
5. **Review** processes and tools such as dashboards, configuration management, and change control.
6. **Restart** most project work.

Step 1. Negotiate the purpose of the recovery effort and the parameters of your power - 10% of recovery effort.

Why are you trying to recover the project? Where is the pain and gain? You must find the main reasons the sponsor or other executive is concerned and their ultimate goals. Typical reasons are money, time, scope, quality, or perceived ineptitude of the project manager or other leaders. Find out the options as known at this time. Can the organization and the sponsoring executives stomach canceling the project? Do they insist on continuing no matter what? Ask the hard questions up front. The sensitive nature of these topics is why it is frequently more productive to have an outsider who is relatively free of political baggage come in as a turnaround person.

You must also find the limits of ***your power*** to fix the project. The ***hard*** approach will not always work, however many times it is fastest. Assess the situation and test your assumptions with the sponsor and other executives.

Things to discuss almost immediately:

- **Stopping work on the project** until it can be verified that the right people are doing the right tasks in the right order at the right level of quality. What do you do if people have trouble with this tactic or do not comply?

- May need to transfer out one or more **people on the Team**. What are steps can you agree on to do this, in case you need them?

- What is the process for bringing in outsider **Team members** to help get the project back on track?

When **decisions** need to be made, treat the general priorities in the following order: time is most important, then quality, then cost. The following question will verify everyone's understanding of this important input to decision making:

- When would you like our **set one-half hour one-on-one weekly meeting**?

Without this access to the sponsor, you may be unable to effect the required change in the expected time.

Step 2. Stop most ongoing project work to focus on what is really needed - 10% of recovery effort.

This is perhaps the hardest step for your project Team. They have been plugging along and may be in low spirits. Without the attention and support of the Team, you have little chance to turn things around. The first step is to put their attention on ***what should be done*** not on ***what is being done***.

Arrange meetings and some quiet research time for you to pull the pieces of the puzzle together. Let your Team take a breather to free their minds for constructive and creative planning to get back on track. Involve as many people as necessary, while keeping the number to a minimum, for a fast objective study of the situation.

Step 3. Gain control of the status report and decision-making - 25% of recovery effort.

Stop the weekly status reporting for at least one week. This buys time to find what is really important, to find the true status, and to start the negotiation process on the rest of the project deliverables. Work with your Team to use the changed status meeting to communicate to stakeholders, clarify goals and objectives, and raise issues from those not on the core Team. Do not debate existing issues or go through routine status of every sub-task. Concentrate on managing by exception during this valuable time.

Get Team and management agreement on the metrics that will really show where you are and aid decision-making. Stop reporting all other metrics. General metrics that can help: Team Morale (more on that in a later column), number of open issues, and complete + incomplete = total number of deliverables. Create your project dashboard and status format including showing where supporting detail is stored. Set and communicate standard reporting period, cutoff for information to be reported in periodic status, and conditions under which your project will report other data.

Hold one-on-one status report process and content review meetings with your sponsor and other key executives to get agreement on your proposed status format, content, status period, and the **specific conditions** when your sponsor or other executives can ask for more frequent and detailed reporting. Document and distribute minutes from these meetings or at least a summary to the entire extended Team.

Other project and product metrics will vary depending on your organization maturity and industry. When you restart the status report, do not report anything for which you do not have reliable underlying data. Adjust the categories to what you feel will be important from here on out, and skip everything else. For important areas where you do not yet have good intelligence, list the category as **PENDING** to show your Team will focus on these areas as the project progresses.

Ensure that all stakeholders have access to your current and past project status reports, status meetings via web or other online technology, a dial-in number accessible from outside your home country, and agreement that attendees will send a surrogate if missing a meeting is important to them.

Step 4. Review scope and renegotiate reasonable requirements and schedule - 40% of recovery effort.

Negotiate with the project sponsor, your Team, and other important stakeholders the specific turnaround times acceptable for the various portions of the project to come back under control. Try to get agreement on **criteria that objectively will yield go/no-go decisions** rather than leaving your Team open for abuse when a goal is not reached. Draw attention to previously agreed on actions and try to get agreement to avoid constant second-guessing your management. Remember to communicate early and often the go/no-go criteria, and reiterate that you will initiate project shut-down immediately if the criteria is met rather than kicking off an endless series of meetings to again make the "decision." It is especially important to use project data and not your gut feelings in your communications. Even better is to also provide your base data in an easily accessible format and location for stakeholder analysis.

Using the data and your negotiated and published process for coming to your recommendations may be key in getting timely agreement as opposed to stalling when people do not agree. Providing brief analysis of alternatives considered and reasons rejected may save you and your Team significant amounts of time in the public spotlight. Of course, prior consultation with key stakeholders is always a great tactic to get to whatever level of consensus is possible in your trying circumstance.

Clearly communicate the anticipated results of your troubled project analysis. Areas to consider may be that you anticipate scope to be greatly reduced and planning to deliver features in a future phase as opposed to the current prototype. Another area to prepare your stakeholders for is schedule re-estimation. Many projects are in trouble due to Team members being over committed, poor estimating techniques, and a vast array of other schedule related trauma.

An important aspect is the process behind and the criteria for future changes. It would be best if you negotiate set criteria for automatic scope, schedule. For instance, if resources being pulled from the project temporarily appears to be a problem, setting a schedule increase or scope decrease to automatically kick in whenever a resource is reallocated for more than 2 hours will bring attention to that impact. You may not get all the changes indicated, however you will at least get more rope.

Step 5. Review processes and tools - 10% of recovery effort.

Take a brief look at **how tasks are being performed**, including the project processes as well as product processes.

Project processes include status, issue management, and all processes used to generate project, not product, deliverables. Examples of project deliverables include the **project plan, schedule, issue list, change control documents**, etc. Many of these are under project management control or at least heavy influence. You may see areas here to adapt to the current situation and possibly areas of effort to eliminate altogether. Goals of improvement may include freeing up management and individual contributor time, for instance moving to more productive task assignment and time recording processes supported by a tool.

Product processes are those used mainly by your Team to generate the interim and final product deliverables. Examples of product deliverables include software, a new building, or a comparative study. Most if not all of these are **not under project control**, such as the overriding methodology and quality standards required by the government or organization policy. Goals of improvement for product processes may be more appropriate quality (higher or lower), combining or performing needed tasks in parallel rather than in series, or outsourcing a subset of product development tasks.

Poor or lack of project tools can be addressed during the project, however do not use tool adoption as a proposed fix for the immediate short-term nature of your troubled project. Once you have your project on the way to recovery or cancellation, you may find you have the credibility and leeway to introduce project reporting, scheduling, or other tools. **Think seriously before trying to introduce the implementation of more than one tool per project**, you may burn more culture shock, training, and implementation time than you could gain back by productivity increases. Working with your peers and with those in other organizations can speed implementation. A survey of carefully crafted questions to stakeholders will support your efforts.

Step 6. Restart most project work - 5% of recovery effort.

Motivate your Team to **get back on the horse**. Putting in all that listening and analysis time during the first five steps could dispel much of their ennui. This step is where you spend time shoring up hard-won prior decisions, any process changes so that they stick, and generally supporting your Team. Careful use of one-on-one stakeholder meetings can sweep aside hidden objections and help reduce the random one-two punch of executive or other powerful stakeholders holding back their objections until a public turning point in the project.

Restarting work by category, sponsor approval, or even individual contributor is okay. As soon as you have a feel and data to support working on a deliverable, publicly authorize work to begin. Do not be afraid to hold up some portions work on your project and product deliverables until you are satisfied that you have doable scope, reasonable estimates, and stakeholder acknowledgement of the new circumstances.

Actions to Take Relating to Troubled Projects

Solutions for Troubled Projects can take many forms, from political to budget to canceling the project. Actions to Take can, and most times should, be taken on several aspects of the project concurrently. For instance, working with the team and subject matter experts to better understand requirements, negotiating with the sponsor to extend the deadline, and working with functional managers to ascertain current status reporting effectiveness can all be done in the first few weeks of a turnaround effort.

Actions to Take

There is no Silver Bullet for troubled projects, but below are the results of a facilitated discussion showing a preponderance of Communications and Participation tactics. Both are crucial to bring a project back to "performing" or "green" status.

- Commitment for the project manager and sponsor to meet regularly to discuss priorities, issues, objectives, decisions, etc.
- Establish change management plan that describes what to do, when to do it as well as monitor usage of the plan.
- Implement a communications plan.
- Achieve buy-in from upper management.

- Create a risk management plan and integrate it into all phases of the project.
- Clarify specifications in writing.
- Representative customers are a part of the Development. Nominate customers to join development.
- Formal product development processes should be defined, implemented and monitored and include the life cycle for project management and product development.
- Use requirements to develop test plan and verify requirements are being met at each stage of the cycle.
- Communicate business plan and align project with business goals.
- Stop work until a complete project review and assessment can be done.

These results show a deep understanding of why projects go wrong and what to do to fix them. Documents and processes involving communication are important.

Communications, or the lack thereof, is perhaps the single most common cause of projects becoming troubled. When the primary stakeholders are not kept in the loop for important project information, decisions, and issues, trouble will bloom soon. Project Managers many times are caught in one of two communications traps.

The most common communications trap is a sponsor or other primary stakeholder who wants only short summaries and who may use this common phrase, “Handle it.” The project manager in many cases will end up being forced or led to believe that they should not document and report day to day project situations that may become hazardous. This can lead to serious miscommunication by reason of high-level summary and fear of “Shoot The Messenger” syndrome. Too many decisions delegated without proper training or other guidance is asking for trouble. The solution here may be to probe the parties for levels of decision, risk, and status summarization and adjust to a more realistic level.

The second common communications trap for project managers is letting the team keep bad news or issues from management and other stakeholders too long. Once a problem gets a good head of steam, it is harder to slow it down.

When even very experienced team members paint themselves into a corner, if their tendency is to keep trying to turn around the situation themselves, rather than sharing with the rest of the team, a troubled project is likely to result. The solution here may be to reward team members who call out their issues with positive brainstorming and shared responsibility rather than blame. What better use of the team mind than to work on important, complex, or detailed issues?

Appendix B

The Chaos Report excerpts - SUCCESS/FAILURE PROFILES

During project recover it is important to address common areas of project failure to minimize the probability of its reoccurrence. To do this, The Standish Group surveyed IT executive managers for their opinions about why projects succeed. The three major reasons that a project will succeed are user involvement, executive management support, and a clear statement of requirements. There are other success criteria, but with these three elements in place, the chances of success are much greater. Without them, chance of failure increases dramatically. SOURCE: http://www.scs.carleton.ca/~beau/PM/Standish-Report.html

Project Success Factors	% of Responses
1. User Involvement	15.9%
2. Executive Management Support	13.9%
3. Clear Statement of Requirements	13.0%
4. Proper Planning	9.6%
5. Realistic Expectations	8.2%
6. Smaller Project Milestones	7.7%
7. Competent Staff	7.2%
8. Ownership	5.3%
9. Clear Vision & Objectives	2.9%
10. Hard-Working, Focused Staff	2.4%
Other	13.9%

The survey participants were also asked about the factors that cause projects to be challenged.

Project Challenged Factors	% of Responses
1. Lack of User Input	12.8%
2. Incomplete Requirements & Specifications	12.3%
3. Changing Requirements & Specifications	11.8%
4. Lack of Executive Support	7.5%
5. Technology Incompetence	7.0%
6. Lack of Resources	6.4%
7. Unrealistic Expectations	5.9%
8. Unclear Objectives	5.3%
9. Unrealistic Time Frames	4.3%
10. New Technology	3.7%
Other	23.0%

Opinions about why projects are impaired and ultimately canceled ranked incomplete requirements and lack of user involvement at the top of the list.

Project Impaired Factors	% of Responses
1. Incomplete Requirements	13.1%
2. Lack of User Involvement	12.4%
3. Lack of Resources	10.6%
4. Unrealistic Expectations	9.9%
5. Lack of Executive Support	9.3%
6. Changing Requirements & Specifications	8.7%
7. Lack of Planning	8.1%
8. Didn't Need It Any Longer	7.5%
9. Lack of IT Management	6.2%
10. Technology Illiteracy	4.3%
Other	9.9%

Another key finding of the survey is that a high percentage of executive managers believe that there are more project failures now than five years ago and ten years ago, this despite the fact that technology has had time to mature.

	Than 5 Years Ago	Than 10 Years Ago
Significantly More Failures	27%	17%
Somewhat More Failures	21%	29%
No Change	11%	23%
Somewhat Fewer Failures	19%	23%
Significantly Fewer Failures	22%	8%

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Assessment Charter

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section gives a specific name to the project being assessed.

Project Id:		**Preparation Date:**	
Sponsoring Agency:		**Modification Date:**	
Prepared by:		**Authorized by:**	

B. Project Mission

This section communicates the purpose of the assessment. Define the purpose with the sponsor; this is usually assessment and recovery, but alternatives may be discussed, such as the best way to terminate a project. Include project results and key stakeholders.

C. Project History

This section provides information on the project history and its sensitivity. An understanding of the history may lead to the discovery of hidden issues, theories or other facts related to the reason(s) for the project's problems.

D. Original Project Team

This should be the list of individuals that were involved with the project during the Execution Phase.

Position	Name	Phone	E-mail
Project Manager			
Senior Management Sponsor			
Senior Technical Sponsor			
Procurement Contact			
Customers:			
Other Stakeholders:			

E. Assessment Approach

During this step the assessment team will develop a high-level approach for conducting the assessment.

Estimated Resource Requirements: *Staff, consultant, equipment, and other resource categories needed for project completion.*

Estimated Project Cost: *Staff costs, consultant costs, equipment costs, and other cost categories needed for project completion.*

Estimated Schedule Dates:
Anticipated Start Date:
Target Completion Date:

Assumptions: *List major assumptions pertaining to this project.*

Constraints: *List major constraints pertaining to this project.*

F. People and Data and Needs

Describe what will be the determining factors that are needed to ensure project success.

Key people: *Name specific resources that are needed to conduct the assessment.*

Skill sets: *What special skill sets are necessary to conduct the assessment?*

Data: *What project data is necessary to conduct the assessment?*

G. Assessment Authority

This section describes the authority of the individual or organization initiating the project and the authority of the Assessment Project Manager.

- ### Authorization

This section ensures that the project initiator has the authority to commit the appropriate resources within the organization.

This Assessment Charter has been initiated by ***Initiating Organization*** and authorizes the expenditure of resources to complete the assessment.

- ### Assessment Manager

This section explicitly names the assessment project manager and may define his or her role and responsibility over the assessment.

Name:

Organization:

H. Signatures

The signatures of the people below relay an understanding in the purpose and content of this document by those signing it. By signing this document you agree to this as the formal Assessment Charter statement to begin work on the assessment described within, and commitment of the necessary resources.

Name/Title	Signature	Date

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Assessment Plan

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section gives a specific name to the project being assessed as well as pertinent information about the personnel involved.

Project Id: ______________________ **Preparation Date:** ______________________

Controlling Agency: ______________________ **Modification Date:** ______________________

Prepared by: ______________________ **Authorized by:** ______________________

B. Assessment Team

This should be the list of individuals that will be involved with the assessment.

Position	Name	Phone	E-mail
Assessment Project Manager			
Team Member			
Team Member			
Team Member			
Others:			

C. Assessment Objectives

This section defines the objectives of the assessment.

D. Review of Critical Documentation

Provides a detailed listing of project documents that need to be reviewed and analyzed during the assessment.

#	Documentation	Reviewer	Date to be Reviewed	
1.	Original Project Charter			
2.	Estimating and pricing details			
3.	Contracts			
4.	Project plans and status reports			
5.	Statements of work			
6.	Signed agreements, both internal and external			
7.	Project organizational charts			
8.	Project control book			
9.	Tools: assessment questionnaires, TOPS identifiers, etc.			

E. Assessment Model Review (WBS)

The assessment model must be reviewed with the assessment team members to ensure understanding of how the assessment will be conducted. An assessment schedule can also be provided to show task relationships and durations.

F. Staffing Resource Needs

After establishing the human resources required for the project, develop an Assessment Staffing Plan that shows the personnel (both internal and external) and their estimated effort hours that will be required for the assessment project on a weekly basis.

Name	Skill Set	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3

G. Budget Planning

List the budget estimate, by task, that it is estimated to complete this project. Include Personnel, contractor, equipment, and other associated costs required to complete all project deliverables.

Project Task	Labor Hour	Labor Cost	Material Cost	Travel Cost	Other Cost	Total per Task
Other:						
Sub-Totals:		0	0	0	0	
Risk (Contingency)						
TOTAL (scheduled)	0	0	0	0	0	$0.00

H. Risk Planning

Describe any potential risks that may impact the schedule, cost, or quality of the project or resulting project deliverables. For high impact / high probability risks, detailed mitigation plans should be provided (as an attachment, if necessary).

#	Risk Description	Impact	Prob	Weight	Owner	Mitigation Plans

I. Deliverables List

This list shows each deliverable that will be produced during the assessment. The resource responsible for the deliverable is also included.

Deliverable	Resource

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Assessment Questionnaire

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section is general in nature and provides the necessary information about the organization of the project and project participants.

Project Id:	__________	**Date:**	__________
Controlling Agency:	__________	**Date of Assessment:**	__________
Prepared by:	__________	**Sponsored by:**	__________

B. Original Project Charter and Objectives

Documents to be reviewed include the Project Charter.

Project Charter	Response
Does one exist?	
Was the purpose defined?	
Does the current project match the purpose?	
Were project objectives defined?	
Is the current project meeting these objectives?	
Was the project scope fully defined?	
Has scope creep occurred?	
Is the project not meeting the scope requirements?	
Were critical success factors identified?	
Have critical success factors been met?	
Was the Project Charter signed by the appropriate stakeholders?	
Does a project sponsor still exist?	

C. Original Project Plan

Documents to be reviewed should include each document in the project plan, such as work breakdown structure, schedule, and budget.

Work Breakdown Structure	Response
Does one exist?	
Does it allow for adequate tracking and control of project?	
Does each work package end with well-defined acceptance criteria?	
Does each work package end with a physical deliverable?	
Does the work include everything that was to be done?	
Did the project team assign each work package to a resource?	

Resources	Response
Were needed resources identified?	
Do estimates of resources seem accurate?	

Costs	Response
Does a project budget exist?	
Was the project budget approved?	
Were the original costs reasonable?	

Schedule	Response
Does a schedule exist?	
Were tasks fully defined?	
Are there relationships between tasks?	
Is the schedule reasonable?	

D. Original Project Metrics and Processes

Project metrics and processes assist with monitoring a project to minimize its probability of becoming troubled. Each of the metrics should be reviewed and commented on.

Metrics	Comments	Metrics	Comments
Earned Value:		**Cost Variance:**	
Tasks Completed:		**Schedule Var.:**	
Requirements Change:		**Resource Flow Var.:**	
Configuration Change:		**Cost performance index (CPI)**	
Voluntary staff turnover:		**Schedule performance index (SPI)**	
Overtime rate:		**To-complete performance index (TCPI):**	
Defect data:		**Problem data:**	

E. Original Agreements (Internal/external, clients, subcontractors, organizations)

Documents to be reviewed include Interagency Agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, contracts, Service Level Agreements and purchase orders.

Documents	Response
Are the documents signed?	
Have there been any deviations from the original agreements?	
Have changes been documented and approved?	

F. Original Management Approvals

Documents to be reviewed include the Project Charter, Project Plan, and Project Schedule.

Approvals	Response
Were management checkpoints identified at the beginning of the project?	
Did management approve these items?	

G. Original Project Management Control Plans and Status

Verify that all work reported as "done" was in fact completed. Validate the current status of all activities. Investigate weekly and monthly status reports, problem and issues logs, and memos.

Analysis Questions	Response
What regularly scheduled meetings were held? With whom?	
How did the project team track and manage problems and issues?	
What reports were used? Who used the reports? For what purposes?	
What metrics and control structure did the project team use to manage the project?	
What processes are there? Did the project team document these processes? How adequate are the processes, given the current project context?	

H. Original Communications

Note any major discrepancies or missing documentation regarding communications of this project (internal and/or external).

I. Original Change Management Reports and Tracking Data

Verify the change management process. Review change orders, and scope, budget and/or schedule modifications.

Approvals	Response
Was an escalation process in place?	
Did a change management system exist?	
Were changes reviewed and approved by the customer/sponsor?	
Were there any undocumented scope changes?	
Were there any undocumented budget changes?	
Were there any undocumented schedule changes?	

J. Original Deliverables and Customer Acceptances

Note any missing deliverables, customer's acceptance or lack of acceptance on project deliverables.

K. Interviews of Original Project Team

Include the important discussion items noted during the interview with key members from the original project team. The purpose of the interview is to identify information that may not have been included in the project documentation.

Interviewer: ______________________

Interviewee: ______________________

Date of Interview: ______________________

Interviewer: ______________________

Interviewee: ______________________

Date of Interview: ______________________

Interviewer: ______________________

Interviewee: ______________________

Date of Interview: ______________________

Interviewer: ______________________________

Interviewee: ______________________________

Date of Interview: ______________________________

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Assessment Report

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section is general in nature and provides the necessary information about the organization of the project and project participants.

Project Id: ______________________ **Date:** ______________________

Controlling Agency: ______________________ **Date of Assessment:** ______________________

Prepared by: ______________________ **Sponsored by:** ______________________

B. Background

This section includes a summary of the original project and what triggered an assessment to be required.

C. Assessment Scope

Summarize the scope of the assessment.

D. Assessment Team Members

This table includes all of the team members involved in the assessment project.

Position	Name	Phone	E-mail
Assessment Project Manager			
Senior Management Sponsor			
Senior Technical Sponsor			
Other			
Customers:			
Other Stakeholders:			

E. Key Findings

This includes a list of threats, opportunities and problems that were identified during the assessment.

F. Recommendations

Recommendations generally consist of: reduce scope; increase resources; lengthen schedule; or a combination of the three. This section includes detailed tasks to be completed as part of project recovery.

G. Immediate Action Plans

Identify any actions that need to be taken prior to implementing project recovery.

J. Assessment Sign-Off

Delineates that the functional areas of the assessment team have taken all the steps to provide deliverables and that assessment activities are closed out.

Name/Title	Signature	Date

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Recovery Plan

A. General Information

Information includes the project name, original estimates, plan revision numbers, points of contact, etc.

Project Id: ______________________ **Preparation Date:** ______________________
Controlling Agency: ______________________ **Modification Date:** ______________________
Prepared by: ______________________ **Authorized by:** ______________________

B. Kickoff Meeting

The kickoff meeting is crucial to continue building the extended team formed during the assessment phase. Include information on date/time of meeting and stakeholders to be invited to the meeting and others upon whom the recovery team may depend. Briefly describe the agenda.

C. Top 10 TOPs (Threats, Opportunities, Problems)

Provides a detailed listing in ranked order of the TOPs identified during the Assessment.

#	Description	Analysis	Comments/ Clarification
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

D. Recovery Strategy Option / Project Approach

Select an option and start the recovery when everyone is ready. Key stakeholders – customer, management, project team – should all be committed and ready to take the required actions to recover the project. Launch too soon and stakeholders will not believe that it is necessary; launch too late and the consequences ensue. Below, select and describe the benefits and costs of your option for recovering the project.

Option	Description	Benefits	Costs	Selection
Reduce Scope	Identify and cut features low on the stakeholder priority list in order to finish on time and within budget			☐
Increase Resource Productivity	Increase resource productivity by implementing short-term continuous improvements			☐

Lengthen (slip) Schedule	Recognize that the project will not be ready on time. The team will slip the schedule, increase the budget and proceed with damage control.			☐
Compromise	Combination of features: Drop a few features, increase productivity as much as possible, and slip the schedule as needed to get the project back on track.			☐
Damage control (up to an including project termination)	The best way to prevent further lost investment of time and money may be to cancel the project.			☐

E. Inchstone Plan

A task to address a TOPS or other work is broken down into smaller inchstones, each with definable and measurable results. Each inchstone is assigned a percentage, totaling 100% for the entire task. As each inchstone is accomplished, that percentage of the work will be considered earned.

TOPS/Other task	Inchstone 1 %	Inchstone 2 %	Inchstone 3 %	Inchstone 4 %	Inchstone 5 %	Inchstone 6 %	Inchstone 7 %	Inchstone 8 %

F. Preliminary Project Plan

Agency Points of Contact

This should be the list of individuals that will be involved with the project during the Recovery.

Position	Name	Phone	E-mail
Recovery Project Manager			
Senior Management Sponsor			
Senior Technical Sponsor			
Procurement Contact			
Customers:			
Other Stakeholders:			

Resource Planning

List the budget estimate, by task, that it is estimated to complete this project. Include personnel, contractor, equipment, and other associated costs required to complete all project deliverables..

Staffing Names	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9

Budget Planning

After establishing the human resources required for the project, develop a staffing plan that shows the personnel (both internal and external) and their estimated effort hours that will be required on the project on a daily basis.

Project Task	Labor Hour	Labor Cost	Material Cost	Travel Cost	Other Cost	Total per Task
Other:						
Sub-Totals:		0	0	0	0	
Risk (Contingency)						
TOTAL (scheduled)	0	0	0	0	0	$0.00

Communication Planning
List the different project stakeholder categories (Project Sponsor, Information Officer, Customer, Team Member). Describe how they will receive project information (email, project status meetings, sponsor meetings, etc.) and give the frequency in which they will receive this information (daily, hourly, etc.).

Target Audience		**Target Message/ Agenda**	**Method**	**Frequency**	**Duration**
Type	**Name**				

G. Signatures
The signatures of the people below relay an understanding in the purpose and content of this document by those signing it. By signing this document you agree to this as the formal Project Plan.

Name/Title	Signature	Date

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Exit Review Questionnaire

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section is general in nature and provides the necessary information about the organization of the project and project participants.

Project Id:	______________	**Start Date:**	______________
Controlling Agency:	______________	**Finish Date:**	______________
Prepared by:	______________	**Type of Project:**	______________
Project Manager:	______________	**Assessment Project Manager:**	______________
Recovery Project Manager:	______________	**Client Contact:**	______________

B. Summary

Provide a brief summary of the assessment project, including the major contributing factors that led to the need for the assessment and recovery process. Describe the results of the recovery.

C. Client Service

Discuss this section with the client contact. Estimate the level of success of the ART, using this response scale: 5-very satisfied, 4-satisfied, 3-neutral, 2-dissatisfied, 1-very dissatisfied.

Question	Response	Comments
Senior management satisfaction with the results of the ART		
Senior management satisfaction with the ART process		
Process met cost/benefit goals or other planned outcomes		

D. Assessment

Discuss these questions with the assessment team.

Question	Response
Which key risks were identified at the start or during the project that caused the project to become troubled?	
What unidentified risks surfaced as problems or crises? How could each of these have been mitigated or avoided?	
Were adequate resources with the proper skill sets available to complete the assessment?	

Was the assessment completed within the planned timeframe?	
Was the needed documentation ready for review?	
Was the original project team cooperative during the assessment?	
Was there a smooth transition from assessment to recovery?	

E. Recovery

Discuss these questions with the recovery team.

Question	Response
Re-attainment of any planned financial objectives	
Re-attainment of schedule/time objectives	
Re-attainment of functionality objectives	

E. ART Process

Discuss this section with the assessment team and the recovery team. Estimate the level of success of the ART, using this response scale: 5-very satisfied, 4-satisfied, 3-neutral, 2-dissatisfied, 1-very dissatisfied.

Question	Response	Comments
Assessment team satisfaction with the results of the ART		
Assessment team satisfaction with the ART process		
Recovery team satisfaction with the results of the ART		
Recovery team satisfaction with the ART process		

F. Lessons Learned

For each comment block completed, please provide the following information:

- *Description of the problem or success*
- *Analysis of the root causes of the problem or success and the key factors that influenced the results*
- *Recommendation for Action (if applicable)*
    - *Corrective Actions (actions taken as a result of the analysis of an actual experience)*
    - *Preventative Actions (actions taken to prevent a negative situation from happening)*
    - *Improvement Actions (actions taken to improve the efficiency or safety based on good work practive innovation approach)*

PROJECT PHASE:	**PROCESS / DELIVERABLE:**
☐ Success ☐ Problem / Improvement Opportunity ☐ Other	
Description:	
Analysis:	
Recommendation:	

PROJECT PHASE:	**PROCESS / DELIVERABLE:**
☐ Success ☐ Problem / Improvement Opportunity ☐ Other	
Description:	
Analysis:	
Recommendation:	
PROJECT PHASE:	**PROCESS / DELIVERABLE:**
☐ Success ☐ Problem / Improvement Opportunity ☐ Other	
Description:	
Analysis:	
Recommendation:	

State of Michigan
(Insert Project Name Here)
Transition Document

A. General Information

Information to be provided in this section gives a specific name to the project as well as pertinent information about the personnel involved.

Project Id:		**Date:**	
Controlling Agency:		**Modification Date:**	
Prepared by:		**Authorized by:**	

B. Background

Information in this section discusses the reasons that the project required assessment, recovery and transition.

C. Assessment Results

Provide a summary of the assessment and state key results.

D. Recovery Results

Provide a summary of the recovery effort and state key results.

E. Best Practices

Identify the best practices from the assessment, the recovery, and/or the transition.

F. Lessons Learned

Identify the key lessons learned form the assessment, the recovery, and/or the transition.